BRIDGING THE GAP
ELA Project | Grades 6-8 | 25-30 hours
PROJECT OVERVIEW

A “Middle School Survival Guide” created by 7th/8th-graders for younger students transitioning into middle school.

AREA OF STUDY
English Language Arts

TIMEFRAME
25-30 hours

AGE GROUP
Grades 7-8

KEY STANDARDS ASSESSED

- CCSS.ELA-LIT .RL.7.2 >> Write informative texts
- CCSS.ELA-LIT .W.7.2 >> Introduce a topic
- CCSS.ELA-LIT .SL.7.1 >> Conduct short research projects
- CCSS.ELA-LIT .SL.7.4 >> Present claims and findings

See APPENDIX 1 >> for the full list of standards.

RUBRICS

Project Rubric >>
BIE Presentation Rubric >>

PLANNING TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Project Design Companion >>
Student Planning Sheet >>

WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT GOLD-STANDARD PBL?

SUSTAINED INQUIRY
This project is organized so students have the opportunity to inquire at ever-deepening levels, by mediating them through three different lenses: the field of adolescent psychology (nonfiction), the experiences of their peers (research), and coming-of-age literature (fiction). The creation of a survival guide adds another layer of inquiry as students explore and execute powerful ways to share their wisdom using a blend of expository and personal narrative writing techniques.

STUDENT VOICE AND CHOICE
The content and format of the survival guide is largely developed by students, based on their artistic and aesthetic decisions, as well as their decisions regarding the specific lessons and experiences they believe are most essential to share.

CRITIQUE & REVISION
There are three specific “moments” when critique and revision are essential: after deciding on the core content and format of the survival guide; after drafting the guide; and after planning the event where students share the guide with younger students.

REFLECTION
Reflection is embedded in each stepping stone. It’s particularly essential after each of the “moments” when students receive a critique on their survival guide, BEFORE they begin the revision process. Students will reflect on the key content and skills, personal and peer experiences in middle school, the quality of their survival guide, their contributions to the group, and their group’s effectiveness as a team.

CHALLENGING PROBLEM OR QUESTION
“Bridging the Gap” explores the question of how young people can manage the particular challenges and issues that are so much a part of the transition from elementary to middle school.

PUBLIC PRODUCT
A student-created survival guide is shared with rising middle school students as part of the transitional process.

PROJECT QUESTION
How can I survive middle school without losing myself?

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

WHY BRIDGING THE GAP?
Transitioning from elementary school to middle school can be an exciting yet scary process. This project acknowledges both aspects and honors the experiences of middle school students. Older middle school students will have the opportunity to reflect and write about the transition to middle school, particularly reflecting on the challenges they faced. In order to create a survival guide for younger students, they will study adolescence through the lens of their own experiences, the experiences of their peers, and reflecting on their own experiences. Finally, students explore the genre of informational writing as they create a survival guide for their younger peers.

AUTHENTICITY
The ability to share one’s truth and one’s learned wisdom in informed, research-grounded, and validating ways is a powerful and rare skill, essential in family, community, and professional life. In contemporary life, the telling of one’s own story is paramount, and young people are at the nexus of this experience. With their access to and fascination with social media, they’re expected to curate the events of their lives in engaging, visual, and insightful ways. The survival guide channels this interest while adding the authentic context of wisdom-sharing between older and younger students at an important developmental moment.

PROJECT DESIGN

Why Bridging the Gap?

How can I survive middle school without losing myself?
Adolescence is the bridge between childhood and adulthood. For American teenagers, transitioning from elementary school to middle school is the first plunge into the world of adolescence. As adults, we look back on this period in our lives and recall the challenges and defining moments. But what's it like for young people as they are living this experience? Explore these resources to begin peeking into the minds of adolescents, in their own words and the words of experts.

Survival guides are a subset of the informational writing genre. They are used in a variety of contexts, most notably in wilderness training, but increasingly in other areas. You can find a survival guide for college, for the Burning Man music festival, and even one for zombies. The format across these wide-ranging survival guides includes very focused headings with clear tips/suggestions followed by in-depth explanations and strong visual elements. In many instances, humor also plays an important role. Dip into these examples of survival guides to get your creative juices flowing! For this project, the form of the final product could be written, but it can also be organized as a website, a slide deck, a video or podcast, or some other format.
The Project Path illustrates the learning process in a project-based, competency-based setting. Project Milestones help clarify the path from Launch to Present, as learners move through an iterative process of building new knowledge and skills, and applying their new knowledge and skills to develop, critique, and refine their products in collaboration with peers.

The Project Path and the Project Milestones provide a concrete but flexible structure for project design and implementation. Notice the color coding? We’ve organized this Project Guide by the color-coded Milestones of the Project Path from here on out.

LAUNCH
1. Student explores the project and develop a set of need to know questions (NTKs).

BUILD KNOWLEDGE
2. Student explores identity issues in adolescence through literature.
   Note: This milestone extends across milestones 3-5: students read a novel while moving through other stepping stones.
3. Student examines middle school through their own experience, the experiences of peers, and the work of experts in adolescent psychology.

DEVELOP AND CRITIQUE
4. Student explores the informational writing genre, particularly survival guides.
5. Student creates a “Middle School Survival Guide.”
   Note: The groundwork for this milestone begins in milestones 3 and 4.

PRESENT
6. Class shares their learnings about middle school survival with rising middle school students.

7. Class shares their learnings about middle school survival with rising middle school students.
**MILESTONE #1:** Student explores the project and develop a set of need to know questions (NTKs).

**ENTRY EVENT:** Student explores questions and concerns about middle school posed by 5th/6th-grade students.

**EXPLORE THE DRIVING QUESTION:** Student is introduced to the expectations for the final product and develop a set of need to know questions.

**SELECT A NOVEL:** Student explores the question: “How can I survive middle school without losing myself?”

**LEARNING FROM A NOVEL:** Student uses their NTKs to select a novel about coming of age as a middle school student.

**MILESTONE #2:** Student explores identity issues in adolescence through literature.

**ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY:** Student uses NTKs to guide exploration of adolescent development research.

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE:** Student reflects on their own experiences in middle school.

**PEER EXPERIENCES:** Student creates and conducts surveys of their peers.

**INFORMATIVE WRITING:** Student explores the genre of expository writing.

**SURVIVAL GUIDES:** Student explores model survival guides.

**MILESTONE #3:** Student examines middle school through their own experience, experiences of peers, and the work of experts in adolescent psychology.

**DRAFT SURVIVAL GUIDE:** Class drafts their survival guide.

**FEEDBACK AND REVISIONS:** Class receives feedback from a survival guide author.

**PRACTICE AND PREPARE:** Class prepares to share their guide with rising middle school students.

**PRESENT:** Class shares their survival guide.

**REFLECT:** Students and teacher reflect on their original NTKs and the project.

**MILESTONE #4:** Student explores survival guide informational writing.

**ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY:** Student uses NTKs to guide exploration of adolescent development research.

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE:** Student explores identity issues in adolescence through literature. NTKs are a touchstone.

**PEER EXPERIENCES:** Student explores model survival guides.

**INFORMATIVE WRITING:** Student explores the genre of expository writing.

**SURVIVAL GUIDES:** Student explores model survival guides.

**MILESTONE #5:** Class writes a middle school survival guide.

**MILESTONE #6:** Class shares their learnings about middle school survival with incoming middle school students.
What will the product and/or performance include?

Begin with the end in mind! It’s time to tee up a few significant decisions you’ll need to make about the final project. As you make decisions, reflect on what you believe will work best with your students and your community, as well as time constraints, budgets, and your own skills and comfort level.

### CUSTOMIZING THE PRODUCT OR PERFORMANCE

**WHAT TO DO:**
1. Review the three decision points below.
2. After weighing your options, make your decision and document them in your Project Design Companion >>.

### DECISION POINTS:

**Low complexity**
- Small-scale survival tip sheets.

**Medium complexity**
- Middle school survival posters.
- Partnerships can be created between middle and elementary school classrooms.

**High complexity**
- Middle school survival guide that address several topics.
- Middle school students plan and facilitate an event for incoming middle school students and their families.

**WHAT TO DO:**
- Students select topics and format from a few predetermined teacher choices.
- Students brainstorm the topics.
- Students are responsible for the format and content, and plan an event to share their guide.

### WHAT WILL THE PRODUCT AND/OR PERFORMANCE INCLUDE?

**Who will the audience be, and how will you ensure an audience?**
- A email sent to all rising middle school students.

**How much decision-making power will students have regarding the topic, audience, and final product?**
- Students select topics and format from a few predetermined teacher choices.
- Students brainstorm the topics.
- Students are responsible for the format and content, and plan an event to share their guide.
This milestone is the “entryway” into Bridging the Gap. Students begin their exploration of the driving question, “How can I survive middle school without losing myself?” by listening to 5th/6th-grade students’ testimonials regarding their questions and concerns about entering middle school. To prepare, connect with a 5th/6th-grade teacher who’s willing to work with you to collect student testimonials. There are a few examples in the recommended resources.

The entry event of every good project creates a launch into an inquiry cycle driven by students’ own need to know questions. In Bridging the Gap, students’ questions may touch on physical and emotional development, academic changes, or social structures, or they may venture into territory you have not anticipated. The key is to honor all questions as students orient to the project.

**MILESTONE #1: LAUNCHING INQUIRY**

**ENTRY EVENT**
Student explores questions and concerns about middle school posed by 5th/6th-graders.

**EXPLORE THE DRIVING QUESTION**
Student explores the question: “How can I survive middle school without losing myself?”

**PREVIEW THE PRODUCT**
Student is introduced to the expectations for the final product.
Student develops a list of need to know questions to guide their inquiry.

**RECOMMENDED RESOURCES**
- **EXAMPLES**
  - Student Testimonial Sample #1 >>
  - Student Testimonial Sample #2 >>
  - Sample video of student testimonials >>

- **TOOLS AND FORMS**
  - Know/Want-to-Know Chart >>
  - Inquiry Chart >>
  - Student Planning Sheet >>

Note: The groundwork for this milestone begins in milestones 3 and 4.
As you design your launch, consider this three-part structure to help guide your efforts: Entry Event, Project Preview, and Driving Question Exploration. The launch may be only one lesson, but these three key segments each involve careful decision-making, planning, and materials development. Let’s take a closer look.

**ENTRY EVENT**
Captivating experiences create buzz, provide context, access prior knowledge, and tap student interests, curiosities, and values.

**PREVIEW THE PROJECT**
Students are introduced to the expectations for the final product.

**EXPLORE THE CHALLENGE QUESTION**
Students access and assess prior knowledge, and ask their own questions. Students use their questions to frame inquiry into issues central to the project.

**DESIRED OUTCOMES**
- **MATCH, LIT.** Students participate in an engaging shared experience that generates excitement about the Bridging the Gap project.
- **PROJECT, LINKED.** The connection between the provocation or entry event and the final project is totally clear; basic project expectations are communicated upfront.
- **INQUIRY, LAUNCHED.** Opportunities to generate their own need to know questions pique learners’ innate curiosity as they begin to connect with the driving question.

**MIGHT LOOK LIKE...**
- **ENTRY EVENT**
  - Students participate in a Gallery Walk to hear testimonials from 5th/6th-grade students, regarding their questions and concerns about middle school.
  - Teachers and students review the project description, guidelines, and rubric, and complete a One Comment One Question activity.
  - Students generate their list of NTKs and record them in a graphic organizer such as an Inquiry Chart or a KNWS Chart.

- **PROJECT, LINKED.**
  - Teachers and students review the project description, guidelines, and rubric, and complete a One Comment One Question activity.

- **INQUIRY, LAUNCHED.**
  - Students generate their list of NTKs and record them in a graphic organizer such as an Inquiry Chart or a KNWS Chart.

**EXAMPLES OF INITIAL STUDENT “NEED TO KNOWS”**
- How have I changed since elementary school?
- What do I wish I knew before coming to middle school?
- What academic skills do you need to thrive in middle school?
- How do you navigate the social structures of middle school?
- How do friendships change in middle school?
- What physical changes occur in middle school?

**CONTENT: ADOLESCENCE**
- What is a survival guide?
- How are survival guides organized?
- What tips should we include in the survival guide?
SAMPLE LAUNCH: STUDENT VIEW

ENTRY EVENT

This entry event requires a partnership with a 5th/6th-grade classroom. Your elementary school partner would compile testimonials that include questions, concerns, and wonderings about middle school, using surveys, interviews, videos, or short journal entries. Once everything is compiled, think about how to introduce your students to the material and if it’d be helpful to have the elementary school teacher be present for this moment. Don’t forget to create a document that provides students with a clear picture of the project’s expectations.

INVESTIGATE

Your project is to create a survival guide that will help support elementary school students as they transition into middle school. As you explore the expectations and the student planning sheet >>, complete a Jot Thoughts >> activity with a small group of your peers.

SYNTHESIZE AND REFLECT

Now that you’ve had a chance to review the project description and explore the elementary school materials, let’s jump into a Share Sheets >> activity where we can share our thoughts and ideas about the Bridging the Gap project.
One of the key components of this project is the ongoing study of a coming-of-age fictional text. The two stepping stones in this milestone support students in selecting and analyzing a novel. This milestone is a continuous thread throughout the project. Students simultaneously read the novel as they move through the other stepping stones.

The Skills Development >> activity collection will be a useful lesson-planning resource as students read the novel, as will the Text Annotation Performance Task >> and Reflective Summaries Performance Task >> performance tasks listed here as recommended tools.

### STEPPING STONES

#### SELECT A NOVEL

Student selects a novel in consultation with their teacher.

#### READ A NOVEL

Student explores identity issues in adolescence through literature.

*Note:* This milestone extends across milestones 3-5. Students read a novel while moving through other stepping stones, making connections between the novel and other perspectives on adolescence.

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

#### TEXTS AND DATA

- Identity Crisis: A booklist for teens >>
- Brown Girl Dreaming >> by Jacqueline Woodson
- How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents >> by Julia Alvarez
- The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian >> by Sherman Alexie
- The Outsiders >> by S.E. Hinton
- The Joy Luck Club >> by Amy Tan
- The Catcher in the Rye >> by J.D. Salinger
- A Separate Peace >> by John Knowles
- Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy >> by Gary Schmidt

#### AUDIO AND VISUALS

- Text Annotation Performance Task >>
- Reflective Summaries Performance Task >>
1. SELECT A NOVEL

The purpose of this stepping stone is to help students select a novel. (If you decide that you will select a novel to read as a class, then you can skip this stepping stone.) If students have a role in selecting the novel, design a lesson for students to preview the novel options and make a selection. Try the Book Pass >>! Conferencing >> can be a very useful tool here to help students make a good choice that fits their interest and their reading level.

CHOOSING A NOVEL

You will need to decide whether you will read one novel as a class or whether students will read different novels. If you decide students will read different novels, you can provide a list of options, and students can select from the list. You can also differentiate and recommend novels based on student reading level and/or interest to form reading groups. When selecting novels for your list, ensure that the novel will provide students with an additional way to explore the changes young people experience as they move from childhood to young adulthood.

Standards
- CCSS.ELA-LIT.7.10 >>
- CCSS.ELA-LIT.7.2 >>
- CCSS.ELA-LIT.7.2 >>

Ideas for Activities
- Book Pass >>
- First Lines >>
- Text Annotation Performance Task >>
- Reflective Summaries Performance Task >>
- Discussion Activities >>
- Connection Activities >>

Reflection and Synthesis Prompts
- How did you select a book? Could you imagine using this process at the library or in a bookstore?
- How does the novel connect with what you know about changes students experience in middle school?
- What new or interesting insights does the novel provide?

Formative Assessment Ideas
- Write a few sentences describing the novel you selected and why you picked it.
- An Inner Voice Calendar >> can be used multiple times at different checkpoints in the novel. The collection of these can form a learning log that students can use for support during the reading and as a reflection tool when they finish.

Suggestions for Feedback and Support
- Conferencing >>
- The Using Five Senses >> activities can help struggling readers to better understand the novel.

2. READ A NOVEL

As mentioned previously, this stepping stone is more of a pathway through the entire project. You may decide to design full lessons that explore the novel in depth, examining theme, author’s intent, setting, and tone. Or you may choose to focus most lessons on the development of the survival guide. The “Ideas for Activities” section provides several different ways to explore an approach to teaching a novel.

REFERENCE TO THE NOVEL

Each milestone and stepping stone that follows includes a suggestion or two for how to link the novel to each specific learning on adolescence. As students read, think about how you can integrate conversations, writing activities, and analysis activities of the novel into the lessons you’re crafting that also address the work of the other milestones. Lessons should not only help students make meaning >> of the text but also make connections to adolescent psychology, their own experiences, and their peers’ experiences.
This milestone focuses on the physical, emotional, and intellectual changes that occur during the middle school years. Students will explore these changes through three lenses: First, what do experts in adolescent psychology say about these changes? Second, what have they learned from their own experiences? And third, what do their peers say? As students reflect on their experiences, some students are likely to share painful memories, such as alienation from friends, conflicts with parents, contending with discrimination, substance abuse, body image issues, or bullying. It’s critical to acknowledge the pain these issues can cause and to establish caring and “listening” ground rules for the classroom.

Note: These recommended resources will be helpful as you design lessons for this milestone. Keep referring back to them.

**MILESTONE #3: MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**BUILD KNOWLEDGE**

**Student examines middle school through their own experience, the experiences of peers, and the work of experts in adolescent psychology.**

**STEPS**

1. **Student explores identity issues in adolescence through literature.**
   - **Note:** This milestone extends across milestones 3-5: students read a novel while moving through other stepping stones.

2. **Student explores identity issues in adolescence through literature.**
   - **Note:** This milestone extends across milestones 3-5: students read a novel while moving through other stepping stones.

3. **Student creates a “Middle School Survival Guide.”**
   - **Note:** The groundwork for this milestone begins in milestones 3 and 4.

**STEPPING STONES**

**ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY**

Students explore the development changes of adolescence through the work of psychology experts.

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCES**

Students reflect on their own experiences in middle school.

**PEER EXPERIENCES**

Class creates surveys and analyzes data on their peers’ experiences in middle school.

**ADOLESCENCE IN LITERATURE**

Students connect personal and peer experiences to adolescent psychology AND to the image of adolescence portrayed in the novel.

**RECOMMENDED RESOURCES**

**TEXTS AND DATA**

- Adolescence and the Transition to Middle School >>
- Social Challenges of Middle School >>
- Brain Development in Young Adolescents >>
- Racial Identity Development in Middle School >>
- Understanding the Changing Landscape of Gender Identity >>
- Stages of Adolescent Development >>

**AUDIO AND VISUALS**

- Adolescent: Crash Course Psychology >>
- Disney Pixar and Erik Erikson’s Eight Stages of Development >>
- Insight into the Teenage Brain >>

**TOOLS & FORMS**

- Conduct Surveys Formative Task >>
### 1. ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY

**Standards**

- CCSS.ELA-LIT.RI.7.5
- CCSS.ELA-LIT.SL.7.1
- CCSS.ELA-LIT.W.7.7

**Students will be able to:**

Understand the developmental changes that occur during adolescence.

**Ideas for Activities**

- Elaborative Interrogation
- Comparing and Contrasting
- Author Says, I Say, So
- Jigsaw

**Reflection and Synthesis Prompts**

- Do you think psychologists accurately describe the experiences of adolescence? Why or why not?
- When you revisit your NTKs, what do you think you need to add or alter? Why?

**Formative Assessment Ideas**

- I Wonder Poems
- What are three key points from the readings that you think should be included in the survival guide? Why these three?

**Suggestions for Feedback and Support**

- Students may struggle with the psychological terminology. Vocabulary activities can provide additional support. If students are struggling to see the connections between new ideas and concepts, try the Connection Graphic Organizer and Mind Mapping.

**Reference to the Novel**

One way for students to connect the research to the novel would be through an Interrogation activity, in which students act as characters in the novel and are questioned by their peers. Questions can be grounded in the research on adolescent development or in the students’ experiences.

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### 2. PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

**Standards**

- CCSS.ELA-LIT.RI.7.5
- CCSS.ELA-LIT.SL.7.1
- CCSS.ELA-LIT.W.7.7

**Students will be able to:**

Create one or more polished pieces that reflect on their own middle school experiences.

**Ideas for Activities**

- Connect Two
- Reading Diagrams

**Reflection and Synthesis Prompts**

- How do your personal experiences align to the theories of adolescent psychology?
- What patterns and anomalies do you notice in the survey data?
- How do your personal experiences compare to those of your peers?

**Formative Assessment Ideas**

- Fishbowl Discussion
- Connect Text-to-Self Reflective Summaries

**Suggestions for Feedback and Support**

- Students may struggle with the psychological terminology. Vocabulary activities can provide additional support. If students are struggling to see the connections between new ideas and concepts, try the Connection Graphic Organizer and Mind Mapping.

**Reference to the Novel**

Students might think about how different characters in their novel would respond to the survey and why. They might then compare their own school to the fictional middle school.

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### 3. PEER EXPERIENCES

**Standards**

- CCSS.ELA-LIT.RI.7.5
- CCSS.ELA-LIT.SL.7.1
- CCSS.ELA-LIT.W.7.7

**Students will be able to:**

Survey and analyze data about the middle school experiences of fellow students.

**Ideas for Activities**

- Conduct Surveys Formative Task
- Questioning Activities

**Reflection and Synthesis Prompts**

- How do your personal experiences compare to those of your peers?

**Formative Assessment Ideas**

- Detect and Articulate Patterns
- Draw Conclusions Thinking Guide

**Suggestions for Feedback and Support**

- If students struggle to think of good questions, ask them to think about the questions they wish they had been asked, or been able to ask.

**Reference to the Novel**

Students might think about how different characters in their novel would respond to the survey and why. They might then compare their own school to the fictional middle school.
This milestone introduces students to informative writing as a genre and survival guides specifically. The purpose of this milestone is to help students understand the key features of informative writing and to provide them with strong mentor texts: examples of survival guides they can use as models as they write their own.

During this milestone, help students begin to view this as a class product that everyone will have a hand in creating. As they examine survival guides, they might keep track of the roles (illustrator, personal narrative author, layout design, etc.) and chapters/topics they think will best suit their skills and interests.

Note: The recommended resources will be helpful as you design lessons for this milestone.
1. INFORMATIVE WRITING

The purpose of this stepping stone is to introduce students to informative writing. Survival guides are a particular kind of informative writing, often employing images, graphics, and illustrations with captions and word bubbles. While much informative writing is written with an "invisible" narrator, survival guides often speak directly to the reader. It will be important to have several survival guides available for analysis.

GROUPING STRATEGY

Think about whether hetero- or homogenous groups would be best for this project. Consider student choice vs. teacher choice, as well as random options vs. strategic options.

ANALYZING SURVIVAL GUIDES

Create a couple lessons that help students begin to identify the key elements of informative writing employed in survival guides. In particular, help students identify elements such as tone, narrator, relationship to reader, overall structure, and use of design elements, such as images, headings, and sidebar comments. You could create a table that helps students compare and contrast the survival guides to identify elements they appreciate.

REFERENCE THE NOVEL

Students might select a critical event in the novel and create a tip sheet for the characters on how to navigate the situation, given what they know about adolescence.

1.1. Standards

Students will be able to...

- Articulate the key elements of writing survival guides as a subset of the informative writing genre.

- Identify the key stylistic and organizational elements they will include in their own survival guide.

1.2. Ideas for Activities

- Writing Informational Texts
- Explore the Genre of Expository Writing

- After looking at the different survival guides, what commonalities did you notice?
- What approach to writing survival guides do you find most compelling? Why?

1.3. Reflection and Synthesis Prompts

- How inclusive was the process that we used to select topics? Did you feel everyone’s voice was heard? Did you feel we made decisions fairly?
- What challenges will we face in putting this together?

1.4. Formative Assessment Ideas

- Compare and Contrast
- Summaries, the key features of a survival guide.

- What’s missing from our list of chapters or topics for the survival guide?
- How useful do you think our survival guide will be?

1.5. Suggestions for Feedback and Support

- A class discussion in which students share their observations about the structure of survival guides can help struggling students identify the key features.

- If students are struggling, Topic Equations or a Connection Graphic Organizer could create helpful entry points.

2. SURVIVAL GUIDES PLANNING

At this point in the project, the work evolves into a full class project. Students begin to come to consensus around the key issues and topics their survival guide will address, followed by decisions about which students will author each section.

You might begin this process by creating a collective Mind Map or brainstormed list of all the topics students believe are essential to address. This can be followed by a culling and organizing process, where topics are grouped into larger categories with subtopics that might become chapters with sections.

The suggested activities will help students begin to organize their thinking around the survival guide. Their notes from milestone 3 will be essential here.

REFERENCE THE NOVEL

Thought Bubbles and Open Mind are helpful activities for this stage in the project, as they both have a "survival guide feel." They may give students ideas for how to address sidebar comments in their survival guide.

This is also a good time for the class to think together about the Author’s Intent with the novel and key themes they may want to share in the survival guide.
MILESTONE #5: WRITE THE SURVIVAL GUIDE

During this milestone, students draft their survival guide by working through the writing process, seeking and providing feedback, and undertaking revisions.

Because the survival guide is a class project, the first steps will be to determine which roles students will play in putting together the guide and who will write each chapter. From here, the stepping stones might best be designed as a series of fairly fluid workshop sessions in which students have time to draft, conference with you, give feedback to each other, receive feedback from experts, and revise.

Also, think about whether you want to create a closing activity for the thinking the students have done around their novels.

Note: The recommended resources will be helpful as you design lessons for this milestone.
STEPPING STONES TO MILESTONE #5: WRITE THE SURVIVAL GUIDE

1. DRAFT SURVIVAL GUIDE

Before students begin drafting the Guide, create a lesson that helps the class make two decisions:

First, what roles will students play as authors? Everyone will potentially need to contribute a piece of writing, but it may be helpful to also have students take on roles as illustrators, copy editors, layout designers, time managers, etc.

Second, which students will work together as a group, and which topic will each group write about in their chapter?

If you’re short on time, you may make these decisions for students, or shorten the decision-making process by limiting the options.

You’ll need to design several lessons that help students undertake two pieces of work:

First, original writing (or speaking) for the survival guide. You may want to have tools available for each stage (brainstorming graphic organizers, outlining tools, grammar tip sheets, etc.).

Second, laying out or organizing the guide in an engaging way. To save time, you may decide to create a template that students can start with and adapt.

As students create, help them continue to synthesize all they’ve learned to inform their final product.

As students work, continue to refer them to the rubrics.

1. DRAFT SURVIVAL GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>CCSS.ELA-LIT.W.7.2 &gt;&gt;</th>
<th>CCSS.ELA-LIT.W.7.2.A &gt;&gt;</th>
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<tr>
<th>Students will be able to</th>
<th>Draft their survival guide.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Brainstorming &gt;&gt;</td>
<td>• Outlining and Drafting &gt;&gt;</td>
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<td>• Rank your survival tips in order of importance.</td>
<td>• How did feedback help improve your group’s writing? What was the best piece of feedback you gave?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Reflection and Synthesis Prompts</th>
<th>Draft or mock-up of the survival guide</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Writing Activities &gt;&gt;</td>
<td>• Peer feedback sentence starters &gt;&gt; can help students learn to give more specific feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How did feedback help improve your group’s writing? What was the best piece of feedback you gave?</td>
<td>• Peer feedback sentence starters &gt;&gt; can help students learn to give more specific feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Formative Assessment Ideas</th>
<th>Class uses the rubric &gt;&gt; to identify aspects of the guide that need further development and refinement.</th>
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<td>• Draft or mock-up of the survival guide</td>
<td>• Final version of the survival guide.</td>
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2. FEEDBACK AND REVISIONS

This is a complicated writing project that involves synthesizing information from many sources, both primary and secondary. In addition, it requires collaborative authorship; although, within each chapter, students can choose to write sections as individuals.

Feedback will be an essential tool for ensuring the final product is polished and powerful.

Student teams can and should give feedback to each other so that there’s some level of coordination between the guide’s chapters.

LEARN FROM THE EXPERTS

Beyond peer feedback, there are two other potential reviewers who can add immeasurably to this process: a survival guide author for tips about style, format, and approach, and a 6th-grader for suggestions on how to refine the advice, tips, and guidance to really address the issues and concerns incoming students experience.

To help outsiders give useful feedback, you may want to adapt some of these feedback and conferencing tools >>.

1. DRAFT SURVIVAL GUIDE

2. FEEDBACK AND REVISIONS

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LIT.W.7.2 >>, CCSS.ELA-LIT.W.7.2.A >>

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

Brainstorming >>, Outlining and Drafting >>

REFLECTION AND SYNTHESIS PROMPTS

How did feedback help improve your group’s writing? What was the best piece of feedback you gave?

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IDEAS

Draft or mock-up of the survival guide

SUGGESTIONS FOR FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

Giving and Receiving Feedback >>, Peer feedback sentence starters >> can help students learn to give more specific feedback.

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LIT.W.7.2 >>, CCSS.ELA-LIT.W.7.2.A >>

REVIEW PLATFORM

Brainstorming >>, Outlining and Drafting >>

How did feedback help improve your group’s writing? What was the best piece of feedback you gave?

Draft or mock-up of the survival guide

Writing Activities >>, Peer feedback sentence starters >> can help students learn to give more specific feedback.

Giving and Receiving Feedback >>, Peer feedback sentence starters >> can help students learn to give more specific feedback.
MILESTONE #6: PRESENT

This final milestone has three stepping stones: prepare, present, and reflect. All three are essential, as they provide students with both the authentic experience of bringing their work out into the world with elegance and grace, and the opportunity to reflect on their learnings to inform future projects and classwork.

As you plan lessons to help students prepare, think about how you might support them in striving for a very high level of readiness. For the presentation, take the stance that anything that can go wrong will, and plan accordingly. For the reflection, try to create an open, thoughtful, and calm moment for students to look inward, backward, and forward.

Note: The recommended resources will be helpful as you design lessons for this milestone.

PRESENT

Class shares their learnings about middle school survival with rising middle school students.

PREPARE

Class prepares to share their survival guide with rising middle school students.

PRESENT

Class shares their survival guide with incoming middle school students.

REFLECT

Students and teacher reflect on their original NTK’s and their current sense of understanding.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

TEXTS AND DATA

- 7 Ways to Teach Public Speaking to Kids >>
- Plan an Event >>
- Create & Implement an Action Plan >>

MULTI-MEDIA

- Public Speaking How-To >>

TOOLS AND FORMS

- Reflect on Learning Process >>
- Debrief the Event >>
- Project Rubric >>
- BIE Presentation Rubric >>
1. PREPARE
Preparations will vary depending on how students share their survival guide. Here are a few options:
- Present to the 5th-6th-grade classes, and post the guide on the school’s website for parents.
- Create a shadowing program in which elementary students shadow the middle school students for a few hours. Students can share the survival guide during the event.
- Plan an evening event for students and families.

2. PRESENT
When you plan an in-person event, it’s important to anticipate and plan for all the logistical details and potential complications.

3. REFLECT
This project took students on a complicated journey regarding content, skill, and product. As you plan lessons, think about how you can use this reflection time as an opportunity to help students reflect on their learning process:
- Their experience of research and survey design and implementation
- Their group work
- Their reflection on their personal experiences
- Their revision work
Also think about using this time to reflect on the quality of their survival guide. Help students think about how what they learned applies to the real world and also to their work in other classes and on future projects.
APPENDIX I: STANDARDS

BUILD KNOWLEDGE (MILESTONES 3-4)

Reading Literature & Informational Texts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1 >>
Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.2 >>
Determine two or more central ideas in a text, and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.10 >>
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.6 >>
Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1 >>
Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Discussions

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1 >>
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

DEVELOP & CRITIQUE (MILESTONES 2-5)

Informative Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2 >>
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2.A >>
Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7 >>
Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

PRESENT (MILESTONE 6)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4 >>
Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2 >>
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2.A >>
Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7 >>
Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
Helen Keller said it best, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

This project was designed and developed as a collaboration between Buck Institute for Education and reDesign, LLC.

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Melissa Slater
Antonia Rudenstine

Yes, in fact!
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www.bie.org
and

www.redesignu.org